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Acting on a resolution from groups in Heber City, the State Road Commission decided to delay until April 1 the tearing out of train roadbed in the lower part of Provo Canyon.

This, the Heber City groups said, would give them time to

complete an economic feasibility study of the Creeper's potential success or failure. If it looks successful, they want the tracks open so they can get rolling stock up the canyon from Provo to Heber City.

### Chance Given

Gov. Calvin L. Rampton met earlier in the day with Road Commission personnel and he agreed the Heber City groups should have a chance to set up the train, if possible.

It "would be short sighted of

us" to not give the Creeper people a chance to set the train up, the governor said, as long as it doesn't hold up the road-widening project in the canyon.

The state recently purchased the railroad right-of-way and rails from Olmstead in the mouth of the canyon to Heber City, said Blaine J. Kay, state highway engineer. Cost was about \$200,000 for salvageable rails and \$65,000 for the right-of-way.

### Right-of-Way

But only part of the right-of-way will be needed by the state for the road-widening project — the portion below Wildwood. And the portion from Wildwood to Heber City is being sought for the tourist train.

Gov. Rampton, while noting he had no objections, cautioned officials to be sure the state gets all of its money out of the land and rails if the developers decide to go ahead with the project.



*Provo Herald 9-23-70*  
**Scenic Railway Interests  
 Given Until April 1 to  
 Prove Project Feasibility**

HEBER — The Utah State Road Commission Tuesday rejected all bids to remove the former Denver and Rio Grande Western trackage from the Olmsted power plant to Heber city.

The action of the commission opens the way for the development of a scenic railway which is proposed by the Wasatch Railway Museum Foundation.

The commission stated that the group would have until April 1, 1971 to prove the financial feasibility of the tourist railway which is scheduled from Wildwood to Heber City.

Lowe Ashton, Heber, chairman of the foundation committee said, "We have really only gained a breather. Now we must come up with the capital to put the trackage in shape and to bring the rolling stock into the valley. We will be rolling by April 1 or not at all."

The scenic railroad has a master plan which begins with the currently proposed route from Heber, down the Provo Canyon. The eventual plan is to extend the route to include a proposed Swiss Village which is to be located in the Wasatch Mountain State Park.

The presentation before the State Road Commission was made by a group which included Jay R. Edwards, foundation president, E. M. McLaughlin, secretary and treasurer; State Representative Dan Dennis, of Duchesne; State Senator Robert Clyde; Lowe Ashton, Leon Ritchie and Duane Price, all of Heber.

*Letter to Editor 9-23-70*  
**'Creeper' Plan Utah Boon**  
*Des News*

Business and civic groups and other citizens are interested in preservation and operation of the historic "Heber Creeper" railway line that has great potential value to the state. Their request of the State Highway Department not to contract removal of the Provo Canyon railroad tracks at this time is reasonable and sensible.

The request by this alert group of Utahns would not interfere with plans to start construction of the highway in the lower part of the canyon next spring. Construction in the upper part of the canyon will not begin for several years.

Anyone familiar with such thriving short scenic railroads as those in California and Colorado knows this line would attract tourists to Utah and would draw numerous people off I-15 and U.S. 40 to stop and board this unique ride into the scenic heart of our beautiful mountain recreation area and along lovely Deer Creek Reservoir. This scenic beauty would enchant tourists to stay longer and instill a desire to return to beautiful Utah.

With proper cooperation by the state, interested parties working for this project could have this attractive, historic, scenic railway in operation next summer.

The 1886 railroad bridge at the mouth of Provo Canyon is a historic, if not artistic, landmark, just as the railroad is. Let's not have ramrod highway methods that would destroy our valuable and vital historic, recreation and tourist attractions.

—JOHN L. SULLIVAN  
 5394 Avalon Dr.

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# State Defers Pact to Clear Rails

Special to The Tribune

VERNAL — The State Road Commission Friday deferred action on awarding a contract to tear out 15 miles of abandoned railroad track in Provo Canyon where once the so-called "Heber Creeper" carried freight.

Commission members responded to a "save-the-track" movement that developed in the Heber-Provo area and agreed to meet again Sept. 22 in Salt Lake City to attempt to make a final determination.

The rail line has been abandoned for about 10 years and was operated by Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Co. as a three-times weekly, freight-only route. The Utah Highway Department acquired the right-of-way and track two years ago because road widening plans called for either using the right of way or cutting into the sides of the canyon.

At Friday's meeting, members of the Vernal Chamber of Commerce and the Uintah County Commission endorsed the department's widening efforts in Provo Canyon.

The track-removal project was bid upon several weeks ago, but because of an error in bidding, the low bidder was disqualified.





## The Creeper's Credibility

In a refreshing reversal of national trends, state officials recently gave Heber City area factions a sympathetic hearing on their efforts to preserve a short passenger train line. At least Gov. Rampton and State Highway Department authorities agreed that those championing the "Heber Creeper" should have the opportunity to develop a full proposal.

The group got active when the highway department proceeded with plans to tear up old tracks between Olmstead and Heber City for a road improvement project in Provo Canyon. Long unused, the former Denver and Rio Grande Western line's right right-of-way was acquired by the state about two years ago. Its protec-

tors now argue they can restore passenger travel on the route between Wildwood and Heber City.

The idea is to make the run a commercially successful tourist attraction. During a recent hearing at the Capitol, Gov. Rampton asked the highway department to stay rail removal until the restoration promoters could complete a feasibility study.

From most angles the Heber Creeper is appealing. Provo Canyon scenery is matchless. Passenger trains are disappearing, those maintained in particularly quaint surroundings could be increasingly popular as time goes on. The Utah Fish and Game Division's major fish hatchery is on the rail route between Heber City and Wildwood, Bridal Veil Falls is at the Wildwood terminal. Put this all together and you have an exciting tourist possibility.

However, reviving and operating even a short railroad line for passengers is no minor undertaking. Will enough people want to ride a train through an area most of which can be traversed by car? And because the stretch involved does include what are considered from sports fishery and scenic standpoints the river canyon's key three miles — narrow through steep rocky walls — is there really room for a widened highway, an operating railroad, an unharmed river and all the original natural beauty?

Such are the questions Heber Creeper advocates, highway officials and others will have to answer. There is enough time to search for a workable solution. Apparently, those with a deep interest are

## Heber Creeper to Run After State Pardon

Wave 24 Sep 1970

After many early and late meetings with many people, the "Save the Heber Creeper" committee met with the Utah State Road Commission in Salt Lake City on Tuesday, September 22, at 1:00 p. m. to ask them once more to delay the removal of the railroad from Wildwood to Heber in Provo Canyon and permit Wasatch County interests to develop a scenic tourist oriented railroad on part of the present railroad bed. At 1:15 p. m., a motion was made by Wayne Winters of the Utah State Road Commission that contract not be let at this time and that interests from Wasatch County be permitted to pursue the possibility of developing a railroad directed at stopping more tourists in the State of Utah. This motion was seconded by Francis Felch of Vernal, and also a member of the Utah State Road Commission.

Spokesman for the Wasatch

County group was Lowe Ashton Jr. Mr. Ashton, along with several other men in the state have spent long hours of time getting necessary information together to use as a sales tool to present the idea of the retention of the railroad bed and tracks. Many, many hours and several dollars in long distance telephone calls to similar railroads in other parts of the United States and letters to similar railroads have gone into the preparation of this program.

The Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc., will have until April 11, 1971 to move their steam locomotives, cars and other equipment into Heber Valley over the present railroad. The State Road Commission will authorize removal of the track from Wildwood to the mouth of Provo Canyon after April 1st so the construction in the lower canyon can begin on schedule.





Dr. R. R. Green Box 1

# The Wasatch Wasque

VOLUME EIGHTY-ONE HEBER CITY, UTAH 84032, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1970 NUMBER THIRTY-ONE

## Easy Does It Through Provo Canyon for New Highway

Provo Canyon is one of the State's most picturesque and interesting canyons. The canyon walls, which are composed of tree and brush-covered towering mountains of a unique geological arrangement, affords the viewer with a sense of awe and wonderment which expands the imagination and promotes humbleness.

**CONSEQUENTLY, IT WAS** decided to proceed with the design on a dual purpose concept. The first was to expedite the movement of traffic through the canyon by providing a safe and adequate highway for present day and projected future traffic volumes. The second purpose is to provide access for the other canyon uses by incorporating a slower-speed highway. This concept is being accomplished by designing a new route to carry the through-traffic and leaving the old highway in place to serve other interests.

**THE DESIGN HAS HAD** to proceed at an unusually slow pace in order to follow the principles decided upon at its inception. Each interested group, organization, or individual has had to be contacted (maybe several times) in order to explain certain design features which might interfere or affect the particular value of which they might be concerned. In doing so, changes have had to be made in order to best preserve the particular value, not for selfish reasons but to maintain the aesthetics and other uses currently enjoyed, not only by the local population but by visitors who have entered the canyon either by chance or plan to partake of what it has to offer. Of course, this slows down the highway design pace significantly, but is adherent with the current trend of preserving the ecology and environment.

**THE STATE ROAD COMMISSION** has programmed funds to begin the project 2.0 million dollars in the current fiscal year and 2.3 million dollars in fiscal year 1973. They have indicated that funds would be made available on a year-to-year basis in the future for completion. Total cost of the highway will exceed 10 million dollars. A contract has already been advertised for the removal of the old Denver and Rio Grande Railroad tracks from Olmstead to Heber City, which the Commission purchased last year in order to better align the highway, resulting in a savings in construction of over \$500,000. Also, the purchase resulted in routing the highway in such a manner that many of the values could be saved from partial or total destruction.

**THE CONSTRUCTION** within the canyon is expected to commence in the Spring of 1971. The initial project is planned to be from the mouth of the canyon at Olmstead to Nunn, which is just west of Bridal Veil Falls. Other projects will follow as the designs are completed.

Construction is expected to be difficult and tedious. There will be several sections of solid rock excavation which will necessitate blasting. This, of course, will have to be performed with extreme caution because of the many utility lines nearby and other features present, as discussed above. The contractor must conduct his operations such that the areas adjacent to the roadway prism will not be disturbed in order to protect the integrity of the environment. This will, no doubt, increase construction costs, but will provide the preservation for which the design has been intended.

**THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT** has undertaken the policy that by cooperation with others a highway can result which will be beneficial to highway user as well as serve the other interests.

**THE USEFULNESS OF THE** Canyon, by those who have discovered its many diversified values, becomes readily apparent as one drives its length and observes the activity generated by the recreational facilities and utility it provides. It is located in such a position that it serves the teeming population of Utah County as a haven and retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday routine. It has become very important in providing a place for relaxation and enjoyment, which is essential to a full, healthy and



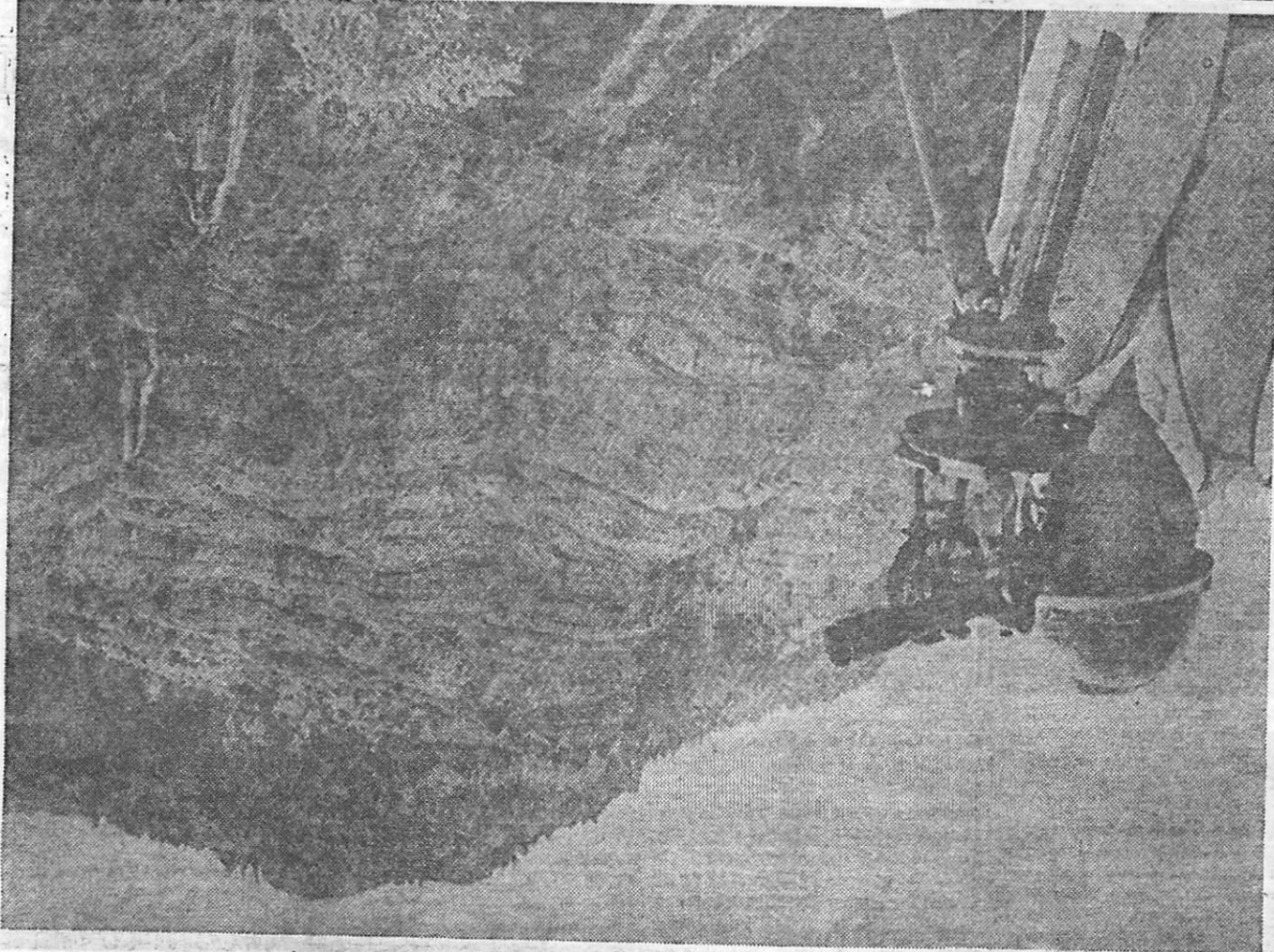
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THE PRESENCE OF abund-  
ant mountain springs located  
within the canyon is very im-  
portant to the welfare of both  
Orem and Provo, inasmuch as  
it supplies an ample quantity of  
culinary water. Furthermore,  
Deer Creek Dam, which is loca-  
ted at its eastern extremity sup-  
plies Metropolitan Salt Lake  
City with a quantity of its cul-  
inary water, as well as provid-  
ing irrigation for the rich farm  
lands of Utah and Salt Lake  
County.

IN ADDITION TO providing  
the values already mentioned,  
Provo Canyon is very important  
to the highway user inasmuch as  
it provides the only feasible  
route for an East-West highway  
between Utah County and Was-

BEAUTY VS. HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION—Russ Ander-  
son, Project Engineer checks carefully selected line through  
Provo Canyon. Much planning has been spent to preserve  
scenic beauty and use of the canyon as a natural retreat.



**Steel Leaf Rake**  
77¢  
Strong and sturdy,  
flexible rake ac-  
tion. Long handle,  
high quality rake.

